

# TALES OF FOG'S LIE AND CABIN A DOUBLE SALVAGE

CAPT. ROBBINS, master of the full rigged ship Isle of Refuge, was in a bad way. He was not only master of his vessel, but her owner as well. The Isle of Refuge represented the invested savings of thirty years at sea. She was a 2,000 ton cargo carrier built by a famous firm, but never commercially profitable. Capt. Robbins had picked her up very cheap. When he came home excitedly to announce the purchase to his daughter, Amy, had asked him timidly if it would not have been better to invest his savings ashore.

"I hate to think of you sailing away



The Isle of Refuge wallowed placidly in the serene sea.

on long passages when you ought to be settled here, letting me make a home for you," she said tenderly. She was his only child. Her mother was dead. She kept the tiny cottage in an English lane to which Capt. Robbins never failed to return punctually as soon as his ship anchored in the Thames. Capt. Robbins's reply to her mother was characteristic. He took her in his arms and said, with immense cheerfulness:

"Five good years and we'll keep house here together!"

The five years had gone and not only was there no prospect of their inhabiting the little house together, but the little house was itself in peril. The first two years that Capt. Robbins owned the Isle of Refuge were extremely prosperous, but after that there came a sudden and obscure change in the ship's fortunes.

The blight which had caused her former owners to dispose of her showed itself. She could not get paying freight. The profitable cargoes went on steamers, the perishable, much needed, valuable shipments never came to a sailing ship's pier. Three years of adversity had put Capt. Robbins heavily in debt.

He was a good man, with a deserved reputation for integrity and able seamanship, but he was simply at the end of his rope. A long passage home with an empty hold had given him time for much bitter reflection. And when he got to England he found not a ton of freight procurable, saw a mortgage descend on the little house in Kent, saw his ship lying idle at the quay, saw his daughter without good clothing or good food, then the cup of his bitterness ran over and he made up his mind to an evil thing.

He insured his ship from her keel to her main truck for a total amount that certainly constituted the heaviest cargo she had ever carried. He insured her so heavily that he had to borrow money to pay the premiums. That might have attracted attention. And he determined to wreck her.

He knew just where he could do it. A slight deviation in the compass would carry her upon an invisible reef in the south Atlantic. He would go down with her and there would be enough insurance to enable Amy to clear away his indebtedness and have something over. Enough to last her a year or two, and then the Lord must provide!

Capt. Robbins wound things up as completely as possible and then came home one night.

"I'm going to sail in ballast," he told his daughter, who met him at the door and put her arm in his. "The harvest season is coming on down there and I shouldn't wonder if I picked up a good load. If I don't I shall be likely to get a better price for the Isle of Refuge than there has."

"I am going with you," said Amy Robbins.

With a start of dismay her father told her not to be so silly; he would be back within a year at the most. The daughter shook her head.

"I've thought of it a good deal," she said earnestly. "And it is selfish for me to stay here while you make these long passages to try to get enough to keep us both."

"We can sell this place to good advantage now; the vicar has an invalid sister whom he wants to bring down here and he told me only two days ago that he would be glad to buy the place. Even with the mortgage to handle there will be some 125 pounds over. And that's a lot."

"We shall bank it and then I'll come to live with you. My keep won't cost you much aboard the Isle of Refuge. I'm only angry that I didn't think of it before. After a few years we shall be famously well off and we shouldn't have to be homesick for each other in the meantime."

Capt. Robbins argued with her for some time, but eventually gave in. It was necessary he could alter his plan and give the Isle of Refuge her death stroke before land and in fine weather—an erring compass will put a ship on rocks in fair weather as in foul. And he had all along intended so to execute the deed as to insure the saving of the lives of all aboard, and Amy should be saved with the rest of them. The final sanction for his ac-

quiescence was conferred by the tenderness he felt for Amy and his unappeasable craving to have her near him. So the cottage was sold, the money was put safely to her credit and father and daughter entered the cabin together.

The Isle of Refuge with a crew of fourteen put out from the Thames on a fine spring morning. She passed through the channel quickly, having as a sailing ship right of way over the multitudinous and smoky steam craft bobbing everywhere on the horizon. She passed smoothly out to sea, ran down her latitudes and picked up

when unloaded, but ballasted rather well forward. This was her particular idiosyncrasy—every ship has one or more such peculiarities. Capt. Robbins was making a swift passage to the south.

Too swift, he thought. Every day the hour drew nearer when he must make his abhorrent and dangerous play, when he must stake all on one twitch of the needle hovering over the compass card, on one rapid roll of the spokes of the steering wheel.

He studied his weather and held back his ship a little. At last on a particularly fine night with a brilliant moon and a calm sea in a southern latitude at a point not far from the protruding coast of Brazil he took the wheel himself. Amy sat drowsing in a wicker chair on the poopdeck a dozen feet from him. The mate was leaning against the rail at the break of the deck trying to puzzle out the skipper's reason for hugging the coast so closely. He concluded that he must mean to put in somewhere east of Buenos Ayres—Bahia perhaps.

Land lay five miles off, land close to a good sized town, the lighthouse of which winked clearly at intervals. Capt. Robbins glanced at the compass. He changed the course ever so slightly. Would there be time before the mate drifted back to look at the card?

But the respectful mate had no intention of peeping at his skipper's course. He was still leaning against the rail half an hour later when the

gentle northeast trade, distending her sails and propelling her gently and evenly forward toward the tropics.

Amy was enchanted, especially by a glimpse of the Azores, high walled, green and pastoral in their beauty. A little later the Isle of Refuge lost the northern trade wind and lay nearly motionless near the equator. The tropic calms were passed at last, and the ship made a fair wind of the southeast trade. She had always sailed with a peculiar lightness and balance

Capt. Robbins made a successful effort to appear cheerful most of the time, but the discerning eye of his daughter detected something wrong in his moods. He would talk suddenly silent, or else would talk with unnatural liveliness. He appeared constantly to be under an obscure strain.

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direction. It is believed here that they were the situation, therefore, at this point should be carefully watched by the Department in order that we may not be involved in a movement aimed to disintegrate this republic.

"Provisional President Huerta." "Gen. Huerta is presently a soldier, a man of iron mould, of absolute courage, who knows what he wants and how to get it, and is not, I believe, overly particular as to methods. He is a firm believer in the policy of Gen. Porfirio Diaz and believes in the cultivation of the closest and most friendly relations with the United States. I believe him to be a sincere patriot, and so far as my observation goes at the present moment he will cheerfully relinquish the responsibilities of office as soon as peace is restored in the country and financial stability is reestablished."

"I may possibly err in my estimate of his character, but I am supported in it by the opinion of Capt. Burnside, who spent a month with him in the campaign in the State of Chihuahua."

"The Government of Mexico." "From a study of the press of the United States I discover much erroneous opinion is prevalent relative to the character of the Government of Mexico. By many journals it is assumed that the Government, which was established after the overthrow of Porfirio Diaz was a pure democracy of high ideals, devoted to the uplifting of the masses and the betterment of their condition. Nothing could be further from the truth."

"It is true that Madero came into power with an altruistic programme and apparently with many high ideals, but his character and that of his Administration departed each day of its incumbency further from its supposed benign character, degenerating rapidly into a despotism of the worst character, accompanied by the worst possible evidences of corruption, incompetency, impotency, inefficiency and nepotism."

"During the last months of its existence a practical reign of terror existed, supported by espionage, the reckless squandering of public money, illegal and unwarranted seizures and imprisonments, the intimidation or censorship of the press, the deception of the public at home and abroad by paid native and foreign agents, bribery of Congress and the army, the misconception and disregard of international obligations and the practical government of the republic by one family, unfitted by training for public affairs and devoid of that measure of patriotism, prudence and policy which was imperatively essential in view of the abnormal and chaotic condition of the country."

"It was active in small things and evasive, sluggish and neglectful in greater things. Madero came into power as an apostle of liberty, but he was simply a man of disordered intellect who happened to be in the public eye at the psychological moment. The responsibilities of office and the disappointments growing out of rivalries and intrigues shattered his reason completely, and in the last days of his Government during the bombardment of this city, his mental qualities, al-

ways abnormal, developed all of the characteristics of the dangerous form of lunacy of which the best example in ancient times is a Nero and in modern times a Castro."

"Remote from the great position where his misguided ambition carried him, he would doubtless have remained a quiet and simple country gentleman of benevolent ideals and blameless life. Clothed with the chief power of the nation, dormant evil qualities in the blood or in the race came to the surface and wrought ruin to him and to thousands upon thousands of the Mexican people."

"The Future." "Present indications point to the reestablishment of peace and order throughout the republic within a fairly reasonable space of time, when due allowances are made for the enormous extent of territory which must be covered."

"The new Administration is not popular, but it is respected; and it, in its existence, has given birth not only in the minds of Mexicans but in the minds of foreigners to a new feeling of confidence and belief in conditions which will permit the resumption of peaceful occupations in the cities and throughout the agricultural districts."

"In all probability Mexico will become and afterward remain quiet for some time, but ultimately, unless the same type of government as was implanted here by Gen. Porfirio Diaz is again established, new revolutionary movements will break forth and general unrest will be renewed."

"With 80 per cent. of its population unable to read and write permanent democratic government cannot be established in Mexico. But if we desire to contribute to the continued existence of democratic government and institutions under healthy conditions we should direct our efforts toward inducing this Government to adopt and encourage a plan for universal education, assisting in the meantime in the maintenance of such a Government as may guarantee protection to life and property and peace and progress, without being especially particular as to whether its character is in accordance with our ideas of genuine democratic institutions."

The advice which was tendered to President Wilson through Secretary Bryan by the Ambassador reads as though it had been given after facts. The predictions are so accurate that it seems almost impossible that they were made before and not after the events of the past three years. But this despatch was written before President Wilson had the opportunity to butt into Mexican politics.

It is hardly necessary to comment at length upon Ambassador Wilson's activities in humanitarian directions. The following correspondence completes the story.

Extract from a letter from Admiral von Hintze, formerly German Minister to Mexico, now accredited to China: "MY DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR: I remember very well Thursday, 19th of February, 1913, when early in the morning I called on you and found you and Mrs. Wilson after a short dialogue enthusiastic over the necessity of saving the life of the unfortunate Madero. We went together to the palace and

Isle of Refuge struck something that sent a slight shiver through her frame. The shock was very little. It was not a crushing impact, but a softer, slitting blow.

Amy jumped to her feet. The mate came running back. In the moonlight forward the heads of some of the crew could be seen moving toward the ship's side.

"We have struck something," said Capt. Robbins with quiet composure. He addressed the mate: "Mr. Jenkins, will you see the damage, if any? I'm afraid it was a rock reef, by the impact."

The mate rushed forward where there was already much confusion. The second mate, appearing in pajamas, hurried toward him. Amy stood by her father. She was visibly cool, but all attention. Her eyes were on him. When they met his glance his face quivered and he looked hastily away. It was the only sign of disturbance he gave.

She did not look at him thereafter, except at intervals, but she remained by his side in the excitement that followed. After half an hour's hurried investigation Mr. Jenkins reported that yes, sir, it must have been a rock reef with a sharp edge. There was a gash in the ship's side about the mainmast which was letting in water rapidly. The men were at the pumps. It was too early to tell if the water was gaining seriously.

Half an hour later the mate reported

that the empty hold was filling rapidly and that the pumps were completely inadequate to cope with the flooding. One had broken down.

Capt. Robbins ordered the boats swung out. Three men were detached from the pumps. While two cleared the boats the third helped the steward to provision them. In another hour the Isle of Refuge wallowed placidly in the serene sea, her main deck awash.

The master ordered the men to the boats. He told Amy that she must go in the boat with Mr. Jenkins. As for himself—

He had lost his own ship and he would not leave her.

Then for the first time his daughter gave way to tears, but after she had sobbed a while on his shoulder she kissed him and went over the side. He murmured one or two directions in her ear. She must look up the British Consul. That should be her first duty. He would see her through. The ship's insurance would clear his debts. And there would be a little over. For the future beyond that she would know best.

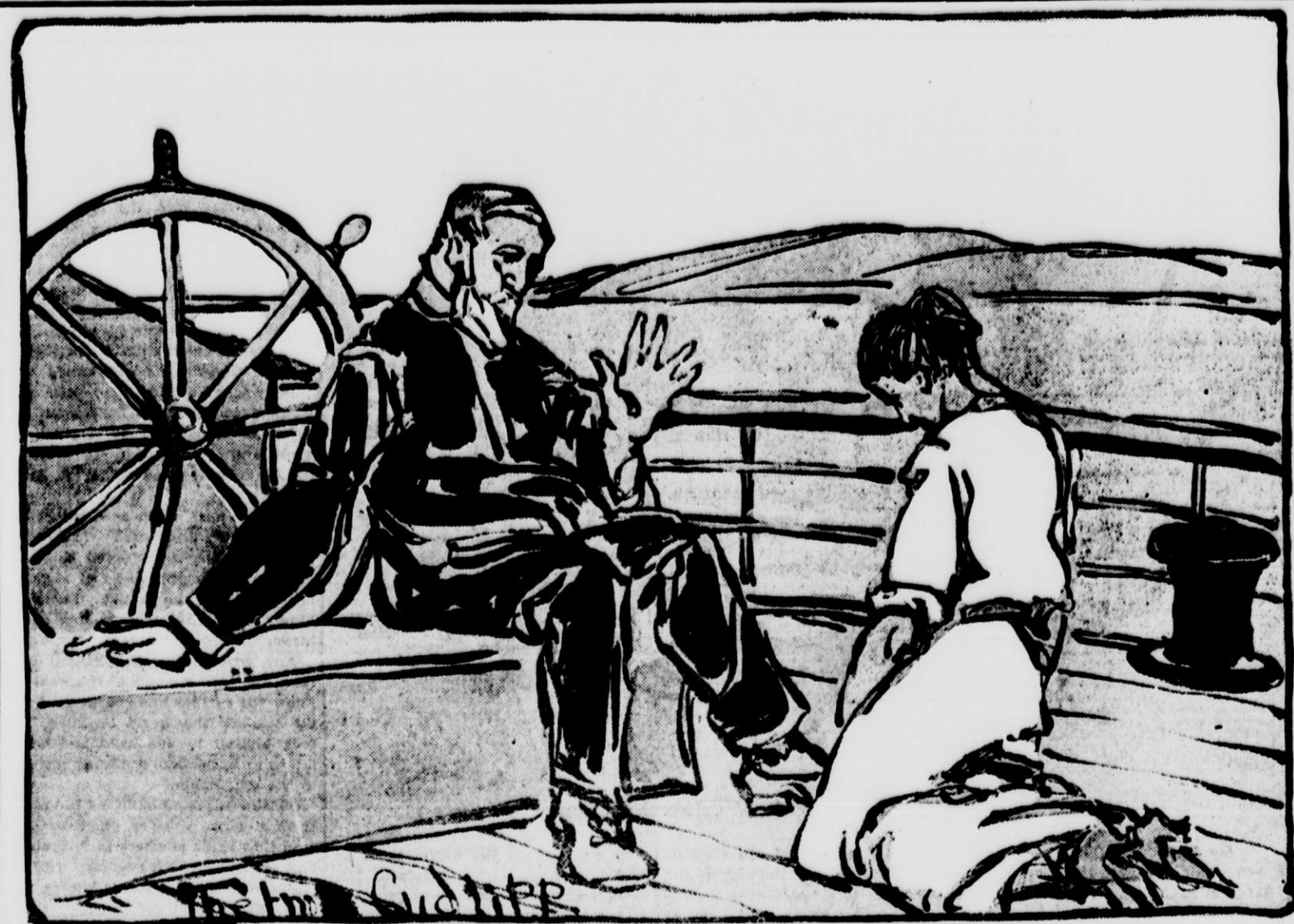
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preparations. He paused every few minutes to exclaim in pity and anger: "Uncharted! It might happen to any one!"

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All this passed rapidly through the master's brain. He dismissed the matter with a bitter smile. Who was there to accuse a man lost with his ship? His death would be the final answer to the doubters, if by any strange chance there should